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thus reveals the underlying conviction that their skill should be morally blameless.

Yet it is precisely the adepts of the more mystical or sacred craft who must face this moral conflict in much graver form. For *cigbeciži*, individual practitioners, and the 'owners' of hereditary medicines alike also have knowledge of medicines not only morally dubious but straightforward evil and in fact called *cigbe benágũ*, 'evil medicines'. Now this means, for the Nupe, several things. It means that the use of the medicine 'harms innocent people', as does the farming *cigbe* which increases your crops at the expense of your neighbours, or that the medicine 'kills people', as do those vindictively 'protective' medicines which punish thieves, evil-wishers, or personal enemies. Again, a medicine is evil if it is apt to be abused by evil-minded persons, which is true of the invisibility *cigbe* and perhaps also of the 'protective' variety, though my informants could not say precisely what kind of abuse there might be. Finally, the efficacy of the medicine might be mistaken for witchcraft, and is for this reason adjudged 'evil'.

The last reason seems to be the crucial one. To begin with, it applies in every case and also reinforces all the other reasons. Thus the person made unexpectedly prosperous with the help of the farming *cigbe* might easily be taken for a witch by his neighbours; much the same might happen in the case of the vicious 'protective' *cigbe*; while the medicine which makes you invisible or enables you to feign death endows you with precisely the gifts with which witches are credited. Furthermore, where some of the other reasons appear inconclusive, the resemblance to witchcraft is decisive. It is clearly inconsistent to condemn the 'protective medicine', meant to attack only evil-doers or evil-wishers, while accepting without qualms the efficacy of deadly ordeals, which do precisely the same. Admittedly, there is a difference; while in ordeals and the like it is the law of the country that takes its course, the *cigbe* places the power of life and death within the reach of individuals, and this power works, though not at random, yet blindly, not measuring punishment against offence. In a society like Nupe, where the self-help of blood revenge is unknown, this is logically adjudged immoral and evil. Yet in argument the Nupe do not reason this way; rather do they fall back on the stand-by explanation, that this 'punishment' and 'killing' may be confused with witchcraft.

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Undoubtedly, the medicines which bring harm or death upon people (innocent or otherwise) are as such condemned. 'There is nothing nice about these medicines,' said the Master of the *cigbeciži*, with some understatement. Yet they are evil also because they meddle in something that has the appearance of evil. And when the Nupe are reluctant to talk about these medicines, the